

Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten

Dollarization Curtails World Currency Systems



By Richard Giedroyc, World Coin News
When someone says the world is getting smaller they usually mean communications have gotten to be so efficient that it appears the world is shrinking.

I could say the numismatic world is getting smaller as well as fewer entities are issuing their own coins and bank notes than in the past.
One quick but very unscientific

way of proving this is to stack the Krause Standard Catalog of World Coins representing each of the last four centuries against each other to see which are the thickest. Yes, I am aware there are more non-circulating legal tender commemoratives than ever before, but there are also fewer entities issuing coins as well.

Several Caribbean islands are considering “dollarizing” their economies, abandoning their own independent currency systems in favor of using the U.S. dollar exclusively.

Countries that have officially dumped their own coin and bank note systems in favor of using the U.S. dollar include Ecuador, El Salvador and Panama. Coins and currency of Australia, the European Union, New Zealand, and



Russia are likewise used officially or unofficially as a substitute currency in other countries.

Among the countries that have “semi-dollarized” are Armenia, Cambodia, Georgia, and Zimbabwe. Other countries use the dollar unofficially. The latest countries considering dumping their own currencies in favor of the U.S. dollar are all in the Caribbean – Aruba,

Curaçao and St. Maarten. The BES islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, also located in the Caribbean, have already made up their minds.

Under a United Nations convention, the BES islands have established an Exclusive Economic Zone. They will use the U.S. dollar as the exclusive legal tender beginning Jan. 1, 2011.

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Pilot of crashed plane reported problems shortly after take off



BONAIRE--Five minutes after take off from Hato airport in Curaçao, pilot Robert Mansell had reported to the control tower that there were problems with one of the engines. Another nine minutes later the aircraft ditched into the sea one kilometre south of “Klein” (Small) Bonaire. The investigation into the crash that cost the pilot his

life should shed some light on why Mansell, who ended up unconscious and was still in the wreck when it sank, had decided to continue his flight instead of returning to Hato. The tapes of the conversations with the control tower management have already been played back, Minister Maurice Adriaens of Transport and Communication (FOL)

confirmed. However, for him it is more important that the aircraft and Mansell be recovered.

The Netherlands has offered assistance. “Minister Camiel Eurlings (Traffic & Transport) telephoned immediately yesterday to express his sincere sympathy, but also to offer assistance.”

The help would have to include hi-tech underwater equipment, as the aircraft is estimated to be at a depth between 150 and 200 metres. Adriaens confirmed that requests for technical assistance have already been made.

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Tattoo Party Boat entertains the International Friends of Aruba



PALM BEACH -- Another fine event was enjoyed by members of the International Friends of Aruba on Friday, October 23, when the group boarded Tattoo party boat for a night of fun under the stars. Tattoo was all lit up and

festive as guest were shuttled from the Palm Beach pier to the boat anchored just a short distance away.

Music was pumping and the party was on, as the bars poured drinks on all three decks. Having enjoyed a delicious island BBQ dinner the group then split into party-animals and chillaxers, the first kind occupying the dance floor on the main deck, and the later chilling on the upper tier to lounge music with cocktails and cigars.

Non-stop entertainment presented Carnival music, salsa dancers, street dancers, a beer chugging contest, and an amateur striptease, as cool and hip staff members emceed and orchestrated the multiple-choice menu of activities and dances, just before opening the water slides, for some wet and wild interaction with the ocean. IFA members of all ages laughed, danced, talked, listened, cheered, joked, drank, and had buckets of fun. For those who would like more information about joining the International Friends of Aruba, go to www.ifaruba.com. □



Fall Festival at L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House



ORANJESTAD – The L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House is serving a special fall menu, featuring spectacular dishes created by celebrity chef Peter Vaulty, and the restaurant's own Executive Chef Michael Gomez.

Vaulty, co-owner of Red, the steakhouse in South Beach, Miami, Florida, and two restaurants is Cleveland, Ohio, Moxie, the restaurant, and Red, the Steakhouse, served as guest chef for the Fall Festival, invited by Certified Angus Beef, the brand, to help orchestrate the festivities in Aruba, at the heart of town steak & chop house, located at the Renaissance Marina Resort.

The special menu boasts a variety of contemporary classic appetizers, such as Warm Peppers stuffed with home-made Italian sausage, Oysters

Rockefeller and Steak Tartar, made of Certified Angus Beef Prime tenderloin, and Apple Salad with bibb lettuce and Westfield Farms goat cheese. As entrée, diners will be tempted by Steak Alla Oscar with fresh Alaska King Claws now in season, or dry-aged Prime Stripsteak blackened with charred pineapple or a cold-smoked Rack of Pork, accompanied by two seasonal sides of their choice.

Ensuring the ultimate in dining excellence, the beef dishes featured are all Certified Angus Beef brand Prime, representing less than 1% of all US beef production.

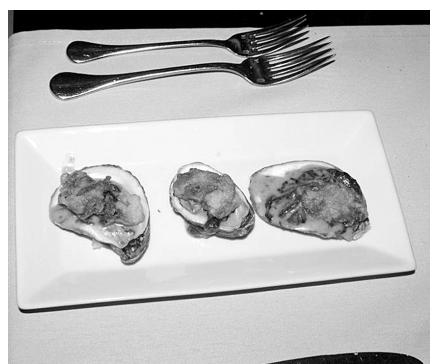
Also sure to please, the desserts which include a Double Dip Crème Brulee with chocolate mousse, Banana Cream Pie and Fresh & Hot Dounuts with raspberry jam. Each of the fall menu dishes, from appetizers



to desserts, is accompanied by a special wine suggestion, available by the glass or bottle. To introduce the suggested wines, the restaurant recently held a wine tasting for its waiters and kitchen staff, introducing them to a selection

of wines from Ravenswood Winery in Sonoma, California. Laura Hayes led the tasting of Ravenswood's full-flavored varietal wines, including a delicious Zinfandel, with the popular TV show Trend Alert filming the event. Celebrity,

fourth-generation wine grower Eric Wente, of Wente Wineries was in Aruba to conduct a special wine tasting with staffers and invited guests, as her stopped on the island, while on a Caribbean cruise mid-October. □





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Aruba's Coast Guard enjoys a day at De Palm Island



ORANJESTAD — Aruba's Coast Guard spent this past Saturday at De Palm Island with their families, and take it from the nautical professionals that know Aruba's waters the best—De Palm Island is one of Aruba's best spots to enjoy a day of fun in the sun and in the water.

The private island offers something for everyone, and is the perfect place to unwind, as there are plenty of great food and drink, and a variety of activities to participate in. The kids loved the water park that has several slides and water splash features, and adults had a blast playing several rousing games of beach volleyball. The adventurous ones journeyed into the Aqua



waters off De Palm Island for magnificent snorkeling with the famous blue parrotfish, and children with artistic endeavors had fun with a few

arts and crafts. De Palm Island is a great family and group excursion, with all-inclusive food, drink, and activity packages. □



Dollarization Curtails World Currency Systems

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The initial exchange rate is planned to be 1.79 NAF to the U.S. dollar. There will be a 30-day overlap in which the Antillean guilder will continue to simultaneously be legal tender.

According to Dutch Ministry of Finance spokesman Richard Doornbosch, the BES islands made the decision to dollarize based on future macro-economic stability, as well as economic and financial integration in the region.

Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten held an "Opportunities and Risks of Dollarization in the Dutch Caribbean" one-day conference in Curaçao in late August. According to the Aug. 25 The Daily Herald St. Maarten newspaper, "St. Maarten's Finance Commissioner Xavier Blackman told The Daily Herald that the conclusion was that a perfect system didn't exist and in his view dollarization was only an option."

Dollarization was opposed by Central Bank of Aruba President Jane Semeleer. Bank of the Netherlands Antilles President Emsley Tromp said the Antilles hasn't felt the effects of the world financial downturn due to a debt relief program and funds made available by the Dutch government. It was Tromp who instigated the entire dollarization discussion when he said it might be better to dollarize the local economy to mitigate negative effects of the current world financial crisis.

Semeleer said if the other islands choose to use U.S. dollars exclusively as their currency this could put the Aruban dollar under "enormous pressure."

Coin collectors shouldn't abandon all hope, fretting a continuing demise of the

number of foreign currencies to collect in the future. Sometimes these nations change their minds, such as may be happening now in Ecuador.

Ecuador's President Rafael Correa is against dollarization, which took place beginning in 2000 following an economic crisis. Dollarization is still popular with citizens, however

the Ecuadorian legislature approved a bill July 30 that places the central bank under the executive branch of government, giving Correa the control he has been seeking.

Former Finance Minister Mauricio Pozo was quoted in the July 31 The Wall Street Journal as saying, "Now that all the power is concentrated in the executive branch with



a subservient central bank, the risk of de-dollarization has increased."

But for now, you can still find Sacagawea dollar coins in circulation in Ecuador. □

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PLANE CRASH

Continued from Front Page

The nine passengers who survived the emergency landing last week have already been heard as well. "It is important to know what caused the engine failure," said the minister.

Technically, it is possible to continue a flight on one engine and keep the aircraft in the air even if it is fully booked. "That is also one of the reasons why we want the aircraft recovered."

Everyone at Divi Divi airline

was very upset about the disaster. "It's painful," said an employee, "but the company must continue."

Director Germaine Richie said about the pilot: "Robert had not been with us for that long. He had come from Winair, where they fly with similar aircraft, but we are a small company and we see and talk with each other every day."

It is the first time that Divi Divi has experienced such a disaster since its existence. "Every airline experiences the usual defects, but we never

had anything like this before. Robert Mansell (32) was a Brit. His father, who lives in London, was informed soon after the accident. He was not sure whether he would come to Curaçao, even though Divi Divi had offered to take care of his flight. Mansell had a girlfriend and a roommate on Curaçao.

Richie also wants to have the aircraft recovered, "foremost to be able to give Robert a dignified funeral. He did everything in his power to save the aircraft and the passengers,



and we want to conclude the process."

Why the pilot had chosen to continue flying instead of returning and if the aircraft had excess weight as suggested earlier, should become apparent from the investigation. "Robert probably acted to the best of his abilities. There is nothing we can say on the 'why'," said Richie.

A few of the nine passengers chose to return to Curaçao by boat, while others booked the trip back with another airline company.

The Aviation Directorate gave the airline company permission to continue with its operations soon after the accident.

There were not many cancellations, but people did express their sympathy. □



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Vice Consul of the United States for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba will be in

Aruba for American Citizen Services on:

Friday October 30, 2009: 09:00 – 15:00

Office hours will be held at the Foreign Affairs Office in Oranjestad and on a "first come, first served" basis only.

The Vice Consul will provide the following services only:

- Accepting applications for U.S. passport;
- Accepting applications for Report of Birth Abroad to a U.S. citizen.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION :

- All applicants using passport form DS-11 must appear in person
- The fee for passport applicants younger than 16 is \$82. The fee for passport applicants 16 and older using passport form DS-11 is \$97. See below for payment information.
- Passport applicants under 14 years of age must use the DS-11 passport form and must appear in person with both parents. Bring both **originals** and **copies** of the parents' passports and the child's birth certificate.
- If one parent cannot appear in person, a notarized statement of consent of renewal of the minor's passport (DS-2053) by the parent not appearing is required.
- **Please bring photocopies of all original documents, including passports.**

IMPORTANT CHANGE:

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All cashier's checks should be made out to "U.S. Disbursing Officer". NO CASH OR PERSONAL CHECKS.

Please check our webpage at curacao.usconsulate.gov or www.travel.state.gov for info on fees, to download application forms or for any other detailed information on passport applications and consular reports of birth abroad. You may also contact us by e-mail: ACSCuracao@state.gov or by phone: +599-9-461-3066.

The Vice Consul will not take applications, offer advice or otherwise advise about non-immigrant visas.

To make an appointment for a non-immigrant visa at the U.S. Consulate General in Curaçao, please call: 001-303-784-7919.



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Experience Papillon's gripping story! Introducing a catching special for the early Birds

PALM BEACH – Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping...

auto-biography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana. Papillon restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

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Papillon Restaurant offers a daily Early Bird special. A delicious 3-course meal with a glass of house wine for just \$29.75 per person between 5pm and 7pm

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Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 586 5400 or go to www.papillonaruba.com.

Papillon Restaurant is located in The Village, just across from the Radisson Resort.

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day with the Discover Scuba Dive Course, get PADI certified or join us on our daily one and two tank dives. Red Sail Sports is Aruba's leading dive and watersports operator. Activity desks are located at the Hyatt Regency, Marriott Resorts and on Renaissance Island.

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PALM BEACH - Rachel & Richard Lawrence said "I do" to one another as the sun



gently set into the sea at the Occidental Grand Aruba. Witnessed by family and friends, Rev Robert Gibson delivered a beautiful ceremony followed by the signing of documents, official champagne & cake cutting ceremonies and romantic photos on the property of the resort. Mr. and Mrs. Rachel & Richard Lawrence continued their Aruba blessing with a cocktail and dinner reception in the resort with dancing and music all night long. Guaranteed to take your breath away, the Occidental Grand Aruba offers luxury in every sense of the word, with a truly elegant decor, beautiful rooms and countless facilities. Congratulations Rachel & Richard Lawrence from Aruba Today and Bella Aruba Photography. ☐

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse offering Spa Cuisine



Palm Beach – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses. Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections. The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing

flavors with citrus, spice and herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains.

"We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," he adds, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs.

"The Sunset Grille kitchen," Smeets reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banters, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine."

Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred," the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon



and Scallops served with the popular Soba Noodles.

The Sunset Grille always endeavors to exceed guests' expectations by purchasing the very best products available and preparing them in accordance with a combination of "tried and true" as well as cutting edge contemporary methods, Smeets explains.

Simply put, the Sunset Grille culinary team buys the best products, and cooks them the best way they know, refusing



to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □



The Coconut Trading Co., is Stocked with Gorgeous Gifts



Palm Beach -- The Coconut Trading Company displays gifts personally selected by owner Jodi Tobman, a Boston native and longtime Aruba

resident, and you are invited to discover extraordinary treasures handcrafted by skilled artisans and colorfully displayed in a beach house

ambiance in the lobby of the Marriott Ocean Club, and at a second just-opened location at the Village on Palm Beach.

Every corner of the store attracts the eye with a dazzling assortment of gifts and home accents that command attention; strikingly designed photo frames, candle holders and snuffers, serving pieces to dress every picnic table up and dazzling glass accents: a virtual potpourri of tropical and distinctive gifts to grace any home.

The stores also stock a fine selection of creative sterling jewelry, handcrafted with precious gems, sea glass, turquoise and fresh water pearls, which can be found artfully arranged, beckoning to be worn. Find extraordinary gifts for all of your family members and friends, there's something for everyone on your list, not to forget yourself!

Popular with repeat visitors and locals, The Coconut Trading Co. has become the premier stop for the perfect gift, with great prices



and convenient nighttime shopping hours. Shipping is available, for larger pieces, offered with a drop ship program at a nominal fee.

The Coconut Trading Co., located in the Marriott Ocean Club lobby. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sundays until 7 p.m. The Coconut Trading

Company, located at the Village on Palm Beach. Open daily from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Email: orders@salamanderholdings.com □



St. Maarten to look for additional cruise business at FCCA conference

PHILIPSBURG--The Port of St. Maarten will be represented at the 16th Annual Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Conference and Trade Show which takes place in St. Lucia from Monday, October 26 until October 30. Commissioner of Port Affairs Theo Heyliger left the island on Friday, leading a delegation comprising members of the supervisory board and other officials. More than 1,000 cruise industry partners and more than 100 cruise executives from the FCCA member lines will be present to

discuss a full agenda of doing business with cruise lines and cruise line executives. The conference has been billed as a perfect opportunity to showcase your destination and/or product to Cruise executives from the FCCA member lines. The Conference includes a series of round table discussions hosted by executives from the FCCA Member Lines. Topics covered will be marketing, shore

excursions and operations. Of particular interest this year is that guest speakers will focus on the economic forecast for the cruise industry as it relates to the well-publicized American economy. The FCCA Conference is the only event that also offers pre-set meetings with select Cruise Executives on a One-on-One basis for pre-registered Delegates. This is the perfect opportunity to meet with key players, analyze industry

trends and discuss current issues. "We will get an update on the cruise industry and expectations for the coming years based on the current global economic situation. The situation today is different when compared to a year ago, when we all met in Trinidad & Tobago at the conference," Harbour Group of Companies Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo said. "Besides getting an update on

trends and developments in the cruise sector, the FCCA Conference also offers us an opportunity for the Port of St. Maarten to get an update on current cruise market trends and developments where it concerns cruise passengers; and secondly, it also offers us the opportunity to give a status report of our cruise destination with respect to additional facilities and improvements to island infrastructure," he added. □

PAR questions Adriaens about safety organization

WILLEMSTAD--Member of Parliament Glenn Lung, on behalf of PAR faction, has questioned Minister of Transport Maurice Adriaens about the status of the body to regulate aviation and related safety aspects for the countries St. Maarten and Curaçao. Lung explained to the Minister that a US official recently expressed concern regarding aviation matters in the Netherlands Antilles relating to the dismantling of the Antilles. Lung further explained that for any "country" to be part of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) said country would have to have established a body to ensure an acceptable level of safety as required by the ICAO. From this premise, Lung asked the Minister if such an organization will be in place for the countries by October 10, 2010. Furthermore he queried if, should such an organization not be in place for St. Maarten, it would affect flights to and from the island and urged the Minister to consider the consequences for St. Maarten's economy if this should be the case. Lung also asked if recent reported cuts in the budget for aviation will jeopardise the credibility to assure an acceptable level of safety of aviation as required by the ICAO. □

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Ouenniche: Approach dollarization in practical and pragmatic manner

PHILIPSBURG--Vice President of the St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce Ludwig Ouenniche is adamant that the issue of dollarization should be approached from a practical and pragmatic point of view, underlining certain key aspects of St. Maarten's specificities that have made it quite different from the rest of the Antilles.

Before any decision can be taken, Ouenniche explained that for St. Maarten specifically, aspects as they relate to geographic, factual and constitutional realities have to be taken into account.

In that context he mentioned the dual nationality of the island and all the particularities in the historic social and economic relationship between the two sides; the multiple social and economic dependencies of Saba and St. Eustatius on St. Maarten; the fact that St. Maarten is mainly a consumer destination and completely depends on imports, most of which are imported from dollarized countries, and the wide circulation of the US Dollars in daily life and in all local and international transactions, among other things.

"The multiple analyses made on dollarization reach the same conclusion on the pros and cons. But they also come to the same conclusion that the effects of

the dollarization differ, according to the destination and its social and economic realities," Ouenniche said.

"It is, therefore, imperative that in our discussions and deliberations, we take into account the realities of both Curaçao and St. Maarten. Concerning St. Maarten, even though the US dollar is widely circulated in our daily transactions and the banking system as well, it is important to underline that at this present moment the entire government apparatus, including government-owned companies (Harbour, Airport, Utilities, Telecommunication and most of the large private corporations) is still being managed and run in Antillean guilders," he added.

These same corporations, he continued, are also the ones providing the most jobs for the local population. In that regard, and notwithstanding the perception that St. Maarten is already a de facto dollarized economy, the Chamber of Commerce is of the opinion that "we need to further study what the effects of any changes in the present monetary system will have on the way of doing business of these entities," he said, adding that history has proven that quite often changes in the monetary system come with an increase in the cost of living and conducting business.

"Considering all the above and since the establishment of the one per cent licence fee on all dollars transaction, the St. Maarten private sector looks at the flexibilities allowing the wide use of the US dollar as mainly a tool of income generation. Therefore, it could be considered as an important and easy way to manage government tax in Country St. Maarten to be included in the new Tax Regime," Ouenniche said.

"Seeing the complex configuration of the business community and the obvious lack of efficient enforcements, it is important to mention at this point that the St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce has been actively involved in advising government in their effort of broadening the tax base, to drastically simplify the tax system with a serious shift from direct taxes to indirect taxes, and the licence fee could then be fair and manageable," he added.

He said the Chamber of Commerce has no pretention at this stage to have all the answers on the effects of dollarization, as further studies and consultations are needed, but is convinced that any and all efforts made in preparation for the final decision have to take into account the specificities of the Country Curaçao and the Country St. Maarten.

Richardson: Brooks is neither willing nor able to run GEBE

~ Self-serving attitude destroying company ~

PHILIPSBURG--Gregory Richardson, a supervisory board member of utility company GEBE, has said it is clear to him that the current managing director is neither willing nor able to handle the day to day running of the company.

In the midst of increasing criticism of GEBE, Richardson refuted any public and media perception of collective responsibility for the situation at GEBE and placed the issue squarely in the lap of GEBE's Managing Director William Brooks.

"It is public knowledge that the supervisory board has for the past year plus advised the termination of the current managing director to the shareholder board. At no point this was a personal issue of any sort, but meant for the best interest of GEBE. It is simply good business to accept advice when running a company like GEBE. A managing director cannot expect to run the public company as if it were his," Richardson said.

This type of behaviour, Richardson said, puts the

company and as such the islands (Saba, Statia and St. Maarten) in a potentially dangerous position. He said while GEBE remains a strong company at the moment, "we need to make pro-active choices to keep it this way. We cannot, as a people, and I will not, as a member of the supervisory board, stand by and watch as selfishness or self-serving attitudes of a few destroy what so many have worked very hard for over the 55 years that GEBE has existed," Richardson said.

Richardson, who has been the lone vocal member of the supervisory board, explained that he thought it necessary, in light of some perceptions in public, to shed some light on how things work at GEBE. He said his opinion about Brooks and his ability to manage has been confirmed by what the public is currently experiencing on a daily basis. "For the past year or so, St. Maarten has been plagued with radically varying electricity bills and increasing electricity outages and generally undependable service. Many

local groups are complaining about the harm being done to them by these circumstances. From the GEBE management the public is hearing about rising fuel costs, fires in generators and water leaks in cooling systems to name a few, but little seems to be actually being done to improve the situation for the consumers," he said.

He continued: "Many stories have been coming forward about GEBE lately, some more fantastic than the next, most, if not all, are of a very disturbing nature. Many of these stories are closed on a note of hope that the government, shareholder and supervisory board would take responsibility. It is important to note the various responsibilities of the various segments involved with GEBE.

"Let me clarify: management is responsible for the day to day running of the company, including, but not limited to, maintenance scheduling, negotiating with unions and employee matters."

The supervisory board, Richardson explained, is

responsible for the supervision of management and setting of certain long term policies and, most importantly, approval of the annual budget, which sets the limits and direction management must work in.

The shareholder is responsible for the shares of the company and the appointment and removal of the managing director. "The government actually has an increasingly distant role in the company, but oversees the policies that control the company, such as the concession and other legal constraints the company operates under," he said.

"Understanding each segment's role is important not only to each segment, but also to the public when discussing GEBE matters. The aforementioned should make it clear why it is such a major issue if management over-runs the approved budget, or if management withholds information from the supervisory board. These types of actions and more by the managing director run the company outside of approved limits and directions and allow

for no proper supervision," he added.

Richardson said the priority now is for all three islands represented on the shareholder board to convene a meeting and make the decision that is best for GEBE post haste. "While the smaller islands may very well not be hurting as much as St. Maarten is and has been for the past year plus, if the current management trends continue I fear that it will only be a matter of time before our utility company will not be able to contribute to the smaller islands as it has for the past ten or more years and remain financially viable," Richardson concluded.

It should be noted that any decision made by GEBE's supervisory foundation board can only be considered binding if all members are present at any particular meeting. In other words, if either Saba or Statia is not present, the shareholder foundation cannot make a decision. Commissioner in charge of energy Theo Heyliger recently called this structure "totally unfair to St. Maarten." □

Read ARUBA TODAY every day

Curacao Course Concludes Concentrated Caribbean Curriculum



Franklyn McLeod and Edith McCloed regenerating table tennis in the Netherlands Antilles

The Netherlands Antilles, as the name suggests, is part of the Dutch Kingdom, comprising five islands in the idyllic Caribbean Sea; for water sports it is a haven but from Monday 19th to Friday 23rd October 2009, it was table tennis that took centre stage.

Argentina's Leandro Olvech, the ITTF Co-ordinator of Development Programmes, was present to conduct an Olympic Solidarity Course under the auspices of the ITTF Development Programme; a course which involved delivering the ITTF/PTT Level One Coach Education programme.

A total of 22 students attended of whom six were women.

Five Islands

"The Netherlands Antilles is a group of five islands in the Caribbean Sea that belongs to the Dutch Kingdom", explained Leandro Olvech. "The five islands are Curacao, Bonaire, St. Eustatius,

Saba and St. Maarten, half of this island belongs to France, the capital of the Netherlands Antilles is Willemstad, located in Curacao, where the course was held; all the islands were represented, even the small Saba with only 1400 habitants and an area of 13 square kilometers."

In many ways the area is similar to Aruba which Leandro Olvech had visited prior to his travels to Curacao.

Language

"As in Aruba, the language spoken at home is Papiamentu", he explained "Dutch is used in the schools and administration but English rules around touristic areas."

A multi-lingual society; just as he had found in Aruba where he had been warmly welcomed and surprised by the enthusiasm for the sport of table tennis.

Surprise

Equally in Curacao there was a surprise in store.



Action stations in Curacao

"I was been really surprised when I arrived to the venue, Curacao has a permanent table tennis venue with capacity for five tables and four of them are showcase style!" enthused Leandro Olvech.

"The Netherlands Antilles was almost inactive in recent years in the sport of table tennis but a couple of natives took the charge of the Federation two years ago, they are Franklyn McLeod and his wife Edith, they are on their 70s but work with the energy of teenagers, this couple show up every day at the table tennis centre, coach the children and also the national team."

Delighted with Course

It is quite incredible but of course age should not be a barrier and with experience comes wisdom.

"We are happy to host this course, the first such ITTF course one ever in our islands", said the energetic couple. "It was the opportunity to gather the table tennis fans from our five islands together, some of us met for the first time; we are very satisfied with the course and surprised by the social work that the ITTF is doing around the world."

Equally, Rignald Eugenio, a coach from Saint Maarten was also delighted. "The

programme was excellent from easy to hard", he said. "Good timing, good training materials and the manual was very useful."

Perfect Balance

Another very contented participant was Maeyla Pandt from Curacao.

"The balance between theory and practical was perfect", she explained. It was because listening to the theory is one thing but doing it yourself you can correct any mistakes."

Certainly the visit of Leandro Olvech has been a boost to table tennis in that part of the world.

Promotes Table Tennis

"During the last two weeks the ITTF has been present for the first time in the Dutch Caribbean, one course in Aruba and then another immediately after in the Netherlands Antilles", said Leandro Olvech. "I hope it boosts development, for sure the participants and the National Federations are fully motivated to go further."

Good news and a further endorsement of the ITTF Development Programme.

Busy Time

"It has been a very active month in Latin America, with coaching

courses in Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala, Uruguay, Aruba, Netherlands Antilles and still two courses to follow in Argentina and the Dominican Republic", explained Leandro Olvech. "Also, there was a training camp for juniors in Venezuela and an Umpires and Referees course in Barbados; it all happened in 30 days, this shows the good co-operation among between the International Table Tennis Federation, the Latin American Table Tennis Union and Olympic Solidarity."

Co-operation is as always the basis for success.

Vote of Thanks

"My thanks to the National Federations and to the course conductors that made a great job", concluded Leandro Olvech. "Namely Sweden's Soren Ahlen, Costa Rica's Fernando Aguilar, Venezuela's Francisco Seijas, El Salvador's Carlos Esnard, Cuba's Evelio Alvarez, Brazil's Lincon Yasuda and Argentina's Alejandra Gabaglio; good work Latin American Table Tennis Union."

Congratulations to all concerned, the merits of the ever growing ITTF Development Programme were once again thoroughly and indelibly endorsed.

Photos By: Leandro Olvech



Stocks slide as rising dollar hits oil prices



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange October 26, 2009.

By STEPHEN BERNARD
TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — Stocks gave up early gains Monday as a rising dollar stalled a rally in commodities.

Oil and other commodities had risen in early trading, pushing up shares of energy and materials companies, but by midmorning those gains were gone as the dollar turned higher against other currencies.

Changes in the dollar frequently push commodity prices up or down, since a higher dollar makes oil and other basic materials, which are priced in dollars, more expensive to non-U.S. investors.

The Dow Jones industrial average swung in a 200-point range, surrendering an early advance for a loss of as much as 100 points. By afternoon, the Dow was down 80 points. Oil fell \$1.60 to \$78.90 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, having given up earlier gains.

Technology shares fared somewhat better than other parts of the market after Marvell Technology Group Ltd., which makes chips used

REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

in phone networks, raised its fiscal third-quarter revenue forecast. That helped the technology-focused Nasdaq composite index limit its losses.

RadioShack Corp.'s third-quarter sales topped expectations, giving a boost to retailers.

Richard Ross, global technical strategist at Auerbach Grayson in New York, said the direction of the dollar as well as volatility continues to drive trading.

"You're seeing this sort of waltz between the dollar and volatility and stocks," he said. In midafternoon trading, the Dow fell 82.91, or 0.8 percent, to 9,889.27. The index had been up 100 points in early trading.

The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 9.95, or 0.9 percent, to 1,069.65, while the Nasdaq fell 9.53, or 0.4 percent, to 2,144.94.

Two stocks fell for every one that rose on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume came to 834.2 million shares compared with 712.5 million shares traded at the same point Friday.

The Dow fell 0.2 percent last

week, while the S&P 500 index fell 0.7 percent.

Bond prices slipped as the government prepared to auction more than \$120 billion in debt this week. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite its price, rose to 3.55 percent from 3.49 percent late Friday.

The dollar rose against most other major currencies, while gold fell.

David Hefty, CEO at Cornerstone Wealth Management, said the market's recent gains would give investors reason to be cautious. Last week major indexes hit new highs for the year.

"Anytime you're flirting with the top, it's hard to push through," he said.

Traders looked to another busy week of earnings reports. Investors will look for clues about a possible pickup in consumer spending when companies including Kellogg Co., Procter & Gamble Co. and Visa Inc. report earnings.

The energy and insurance industries also will be in focus throughout the week with ConocoPhillips and Exxon Mobil Corp. as well as Aetna Inc. and MetLife Inc. scheduled to release quarterly results.

Marvell rose 43 cents, or 2.9 percent, to \$15.01, while RadioShack rose \$2.42, or 15.5 percent, to \$18.08.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies fell 5.39, or 0.9 percent, to 595.47.

Overseas markets fell after U.S. stocks dropped. Britain's FTSE 100 fell 1 percent, Germany's DAX index and France's CAC-40 each fell 1.7 percent. Japan's Nikkei stock average rose 0.8 percent. □



A "For Sale" sign is seen in front of a home on October 21, in Miami, Florida. The market share of subprime US home mortgages, which caused the collapse of the housing market at the epicenter of the financial crisis, has returned to pre-crisis levels, a central bank report showed Monday.

(AFP/Getty Images/File/Joe Raedle)

Subprime home mortgages back to pre-crisis levels: Fed

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The market share of subprime US home mortgages, which caused the collapse of the housing market at the epicenter of the financial crisis, has returned to pre-crisis levels, a central bank report showed Monday.

But the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco study said nearly all of the loans were now owned or guaranteed by the government, which has pumped hundreds of billions of dollars to keep the market afloat.

Government-backed agencies Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Ginnie Mae "are providing unprecedented support to the housing market -- owning or guaranteeing almost 95 percent of the new residential mortgage lending," said John Krainer, a senior economist with the regional central bank who penned the report.

"This shift in mortgage finance has had a profound impact on the types of borrowers receiving loans," he said.

The subprime market had shrunk to virtually zero percent in the first quarter of 2008 after triggering the housing collapse following defaults by borrowers.

Subprime borrowers, usually lacking good credit histories, find it nearly impossible to obtain mortgage loans from mainstream lenders.

Since the January-March period last year, "increased FHA (Federal Housing Administration) lending... has revived this segment of the market," Krainer said.

"After plummeting in early 2008, the share of borrowers with FICO credit scores lower than 660 has returned to just higher than 20 percent, the same share as when subprime securitization peaked in 2006," he said.

FICO is a company that developed a popular scoring system for assessing credit risk. Subprime loans are usually classified as those where the borrower has a FICO score below 660.

The report warned that recovery of the embattled housing industry will be slow amid a credit crunch that has persisted since the crisis.

"Credit supply problems, however, still appear to be a major problem affecting the housing market," it said.

"With the vast majority of current mortgage lending now intermediated in some form by the GSEs (government-sponsored enterprises), it will be difficult for the housing market to return to normal." □

King of Pop aims for king of music film status



In this film publicity image released by Sony Pictures, the movie poster for Michael Jackson's 'This is It,' film, is shown.

(AP Photo/Sony Pictures)

By DAVID GERMAIN,
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — The 50 comeback concerts Michael Jackson planned in London last summer sold out in a few hours.

With those shows relegated to what-if status by his death in June, the question now is how well the singer can pack movie theaters with "Michael Jackson: This Is It," a chronicle of his concert preparations that now stands as his final performance.

Advance ticket sales have been brisk, but no one has a handle on how big the turnout might be this week.

Some think it's likely to surpass the \$31.1 million opening weekend and the \$65.3 million lifetime haul of "Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert," the biggest concert movie on record.

Some expect a \$100 million total domestic haul. Others think it could go much higher, but how high is anyone's guess.

"It reminds me of 'Blair Witch,' it reminds me of 'Fahrenheit 9/11,' it reminds me of 'Passion of the Christ.' You even have to throw in 'Snakes on a Plane.' Films that are bigger than life and just unpredictable. We don't really know how they're going to do," said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com.

For the record, "The Blair Witch Project," "Fahrenheit 9/11" and "The Passion of the Christ" all were hits.

"Snakes on a Plane," despite tremendous advance buzz, fizzled.

Not quite a concert film, not quite a documentary, "This Is It" is like nothing that has hit theaters before. It comes just months after Jackson's death, with fans still eagerly digesting every scrap of news about him. It distills more than 100 hours of footage shot as Jackson rehearsed for the concerts in the weeks before his death. And it truly is a final glimpse of an artist who ruled the pop charts in the 1980s before retreating to a reclusive life amid allegations of child molestation.

Distributor Sony is treating the film like the crown jewels, keeping it under wraps until the big blowout Tuesday night, when there will be simultaneous premieres worldwide, followed by advance screenings for paying customers ahead of Wednesday's official theatrical debut.

No critics have seen it, and entertainment journalists were shown only 12 minutes of footage last week before interviews with the filmmakers.

Sony, which paid \$60 million for the film rights, plans to have the movie out for just over two weeks, lending it some of the exclusivity of Jackson's aborted concert stand in London.

"We think the 16 days is right. It's sort of a special event that you want to frame in a special way," said Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony.

If business really takes off, Sony could extend the film's run, as Disney did with Cyrus' concert movie, which originally was scheduled for only a one-week leg in theaters.

Concert films historically have been a niche genre, with only a few finding a lasting audience in theaters or on home video, among them "Woodstock," "Monterey Pop," "Madonna: Truth or Dare," the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter" and "Shine a Light," The Band's "The Last Waltz," the Talking Heads' "Stop Making Sense" and "U2: Rattle and Hum."

Box-office results for concert flicks have been petty cash

compared to blockbuster action films and comedies, with last March's "Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience" running a distant second to Cyrus' film in the record books, topping out at \$19.2 million.

The Batman blockbuster "The Dark Knight" took in \$67.2 million on opening day, more than Cyrus' concert movie did in its entire run.

"This Is It" opens in about five times as many theaters as Cyrus' movie, which played in only 683 cinemas because of the limited number equipped to show digital 3-D films.

Advance ticket sellers Fandango.com and MovieTickets.com report that sales for "This Is It" are running about where Cyrus' film was days before its release.

Comparisons between the two movies are dicey, though. Fans of Jackson, who was 50, are much older than Cyrus' and generally less inclined than young audiences to make the trek to movie theaters. Yet Cyrus does not have the huge global appeal of Jackson, whose film is opening in virtually every country at the same time.

"As big as she is, I don't think she holds a candle to Michael Jackson around the world," said Walt Borchers, senior vice president of sales and marketing for MovieTickets.com.

And, added Borchers, the fact that Jackson now is out of reach deepens his film's appeal. "Miley, you could have seen her in concert. Now nobody is able to see Michael Jackson in concert. On this film, that does add some fervor," Borchers said.

Based on the initial fervor when tickets first went on sale in late September, Fandango.com expected that "This Is It" easily would shoot past the box-office receipts of Cyrus' movie, said Rick Butler, chief operating officer.

Since then, though, sales have leveled off, so it's uncertain Jackson's movie will hit that mark, Butler said.

The movie's durability ultimately will come down to how good a performance Jackson gives, Butler said. □



FILE - In this Sept. 13, 2009 file photo, Jay-Z performs with Alicia Keys during the MTV Video Music Awards in New York.

(AP Photo/Jason DeCrow, file)

Jay-Z talks World Series, Broadway and DJ Hero

By MESFIN FEKADU,
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees have been blasting Jay-Z's "Empire State of Mind" during their playoff run. Now, the team is having the rap king perform the song live to kick off Game 1 of the World Series.

Jay-Z and fellow New Yorker Alicia Keys are set to perform the hit on Wednesday, as the Yankees take on defending World Series champs, the Philadelphia Phillies.

"Thank the good Lord for making me a Yankee," the Brooklyn native said in an interview Monday.

He calls the opportunity a "once in a lifetime experience" and says though the jam has become an unofficial New York anthem, he's not pushing for it to be the city's theme song.

"I'm not pitching it for anything, it's just a song I made for New York City," he said.

"Really it's about inspiration, it's about hope — I think that's what connects with people. The song connects outside of New York. Every night I play it, there's a monster response, no matter if we're in Providence or whenever."

The 39-year-old rapper was busy Monday promoting the new "DJ Hero" video game, out Tuesday. A special edition of the game — "DJ Hero Renegade Edition" — features a turntable controller as well as a two CDs, one from Jay-Z and another from Eminem. Jay-Z, who has released eleven albums, says this was an opportunity for him to release his "best of" material. □

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with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool.

The garden will feel like an oasis true to the projects name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the common area to lounge and relax. Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclusive to the owners. Construction on Oasis at Eagle

Beach is moving fast. Fifteen of the thirty five units have already been sold. The condominiums will be ready for occupancy by March 2010. Oasis is located on Eagle Beach which allows for an easy access, even on foot, to the best casinos, restaurants, golf courses, shopping areas and night life the Aruba has to offer. The experienced sales team of Oasis invites you for a visit to learn about this new gem on the beach.

The site tour will take you up in the complex where you will enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and beach as well as a wonderful view of Oranjestad where the cruise ships are docked. The views from the rooftop terrace are stunning to say the least. The Oasis sales team is ready to assist you.

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In this June 18, 2006 file photo, U.S. soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, shield themselves from the dust as a CH-47 Chinook helicopter takes off, in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan.

Associated Press

DEA agents among 14 Americans dead in Afghanistan

HEIDI VOGT
ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writers

KABUL (AP) — A U.S. military helicopter crashed Monday while returning from the scene of a firefight with suspected Taliban drug traffickers in western Afghanistan, killing 10 Americans including three DEA agents in a not-so-noticed war within a war.

Four more troops were killed when two helicopters collided over southern Afghanistan, making it the deadliest day for U.S. forces in this country in more than four years. U.S. military officials insisted neither crash was believed a result of hostile fire, although the Taliban claimed they shot down a U.S. helicopter in the western province of Badghis.

Continued on Page B6

Kerry: U.S. general's war plan goes too far

ANNE GEARAN
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A war plan that asks President Barack Obama to commit tens of thousands of additional U.S. forces to Afghanistan is too ambitious, a top Senate Democrat said Monday.

Sen. John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the White House's point man during last week's tense talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, praised commanding Gen. Stanley McChrystal but said his plan for adding troops in Afghanistan "goes too far, too fast."

Kerry's stance would aim for a modest increase in American forces, treading middle ground between Republicans who have said Obama would put soldiers and the country at risk by rejecting McChrystal's larger request and anti-war Democrats who question whether the United States has already taken on too much in Afghanistan.

Continued on Next Page



Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who recently returned from Afghanistan, speaks with reporters following his meeting with President Barack Obama, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009, at the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

Castro's sister says she collaborated with CIA

LAURA WIDES-MUNOZ, AP Hispanic Affairs Writer
MIAMI (AP) — One of Fidel Castro's sisters says in a memoir released Monday that she collaborated with the CIA against her brother, starting shortly after the United States' failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

Juanita Castro, 76, initially supported her brother's 1959 overthrow of the Batista dictatorship but quickly grew disillusioned. In a Spanish-language memoir published by Santillana USA and co-written by journalist Maria Antonieta Collins, she says the wife of the Brazilian Ambassador to Cuba persuaded her to meet a CIA officer during a trip to Mexico in 1961.

By then, her house had already become a sanctuary for anti-communists, and Fidel Castro



In a Thursday, Aug. 3, 2006 file photo, Juanita Castro, the sister of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, talks to reporters about her brother in Miami.

Associated Press

had warned her about getting involved with the "gusanos," or worms, as those who opposed the revolution were called.

Continued on Page B3



An Iraqi woman reacts at the site of the suicide bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, Monday, Oct. 26, 2009. A pair of suicide car bombings Sunday devastated the heart of Iraq's capital in the country's deadliest attack in more than two years.

Associated Press

Iraqis angry at security lapse, bombs kill 155

BARBARA SURK
HAMID AHMED
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqis vented anger Monday at a major security lapse that allowed two suicide truck bombers to penetrate what was supposed to be one of Baghdad's safest areas, killing 155 people including 24 children on a bus leaving a daycare center next to one of the government ministries targeted.

Continued on Page B8

Obama says he will not rush Afghanistan decision



President Barack Obama speaks at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station, Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, in Jacksonville, Fla.

CHARLES BABINGTON

Associated Press Writer

JACKSONVILLE, Florida (AP) — President Barack Obama pledged on Monday not to “rush the solemn decision” to send more troops to battle in Afghanistan as he weighs military options on what to do next in the troubled war.

“I won’t risk your lives unless it is absolutely necessary,” Obama told service men and women at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. He promised a “clear mission” with defined goals and the equipment needed to get the job done. Obama, who is in the process of weighing options put forward by the Pentagon that include various levels of increased troops, spoke of the latest example of the dangers and sacrifices there — helicopter crashes that killed 14 Americans in the deadliest day for the U.S. mission in Afghanistan in more than four years. “Fourteen Americans gave their lives. And our prayers are with these service members, their civilian colleagues and the families who loved them,” Obama said. “They were willing to risk their lives, in this case to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a safe haven for al-Qaida and its extremist allies.”

His visit to the naval air station came after he met at the White House with his national security team for a sixth full-scale conference on the future of the faltering war. Last week, former Vice

President Dick Cheney prodded Obama to make a swift decision on his Afghanistan strategy. “The White House must stop dithering while America’s armed forces are in danger,” Cheney said. “It’s time for President Obama to do what it takes to win a war he has repeatedly and rightly called a war of necessity.”

Waves of boisterous cheers greeted the president. Obama noted that representatives of all America’s military services attended the gathering.

The administration is debating whether to send tens of thousands more troops to the country, while the Afghan government is moving to

hold a Nov. 7 runoff election between President Hamid Karzai and challenger Abdullah Abdullah. The runoff comes after complaints by international monitors of fraudulent voting in the first election.

But Obama did not tip his hand on how he might decide.

“I will never rush the solemn decision of sending you into harm’s way,” he said.

If it is necessary, Obama added, “we will back you up to the hilt.”

Framed by dozens of white-uniformed sailors, Obama stood on a stage under a huge American flag.

“By being here, you join a

long, unbroken line of service at Jacksonville — naval aviators from World War II to Korea to Vietnam, among them a great patriot named John McCain,” he said. McCain, the former Navy pilot and Vietnam prisoner of war and now senator from Arizona, was Obama’s Republican presidential opponent. McCain’s family lived in Jacksonville for several years while he was a prisoner of war. Upon his release, he lived here, serving as a commanding officer of his squadron.

“Thank you for reminding us of the country we can and must always be,” Obama told the troops. □

Associated Press

KERRY

Continued from Page B1

“Under the right circumstances, if we can be confident that military efforts can be sustained and built upon, then I would support the president should he decide to send some additional troops to regain the initiative,” said Kerry, the Democrats’ unsuccessful candidate in 2004.

Obama is nearing a decision on whether to commit large numbers of additional troops to the war next year. McChrystal favors an increase of roughly 40,000, officials have told The Associated Press, which would allow the U.S. military to expand its reach in areas of the country’s south and east now under Taliban sway.

Fresh from several days of talks in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, Kerry warned that the United States also cannot risk a drastic shift in strategy that would focus narrowly on hunting terrorists.

“We all see the appeal of a limited counterterrorism mission, and no doubt it is part of the endgame, but I don’t think we’re there yet,” Kerry said during remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations. “A narrow mission that cedes half the country to the Taliban could lead to civil war” in Afghanistan and threaten the fragile civilian government in Pakistan, he said.

Obama mourned 14 Americans killed Monday in helicopter crashes in Afghanistan, and told a military audience he will not be hurried as he evaluates whether to alter U.S. strategy in the war.

“I will never rush the solemn decision of sending you into harm’s way. I won’t risk your lives unless it is absolutely necessary,” Obama said during a visit to Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida.

Obama convened another in a series of White House war council sessions with Cabinet officials and other top advisers earlier Monday amid Republican criticism that he is taking too long to choose his next move.

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters Monday that a decision is still expected in the coming weeks.

As Obama weighs his options on the military side, the State Department said Monday it was on track to meet the goal of tripling the number of U.S. civilian worker in Afghanistan by year’s end or very early 2010.

That will bring the number of agronomists, lawyers, diplomats and development experts in the country from 320 in January to 974, Deputy Secretary of State for Management Jack Lew told reporters.

Lew said he did not expect Obama’s decision on troops to have a significant effect on the civilians except in cases where additional troops might secure new areas of the country for

Helicopter fatalities taking heavy toll

Two crashes in Afghanistan that killed 14 Americans on Monday were the latest in a series of deadly incidents involving U.S. helicopters.



SOURCES: Department of Defense; AP News Research Center

AP

Graphic shows fatal helicopter crashes in Afghanistan

Associated Press

them to work safely.

Three civilian Drug Enforcement Administration agents died Monday during the crash of a U.S. military helicopter that also killed seven U.S. service members, an official said. The craft went down in the west of Afghanistan.

The casualties mark the first DEA deaths in Afghanistan since the drug agency began operations there in 2005.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because no formal announcement has been made. Officials say the helicopter had left the scene of a fire fight with insurgents. □





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CASTRO'S SISTER

Continued from Page B1

Castro says in the book, "My Brothers Fidel and Raul. The Secret Story," that she traveled to Mexico City under the pretense of visiting her younger sister Enma. There she also secretly met a CIA officer who identified himself as "Enrique" at the elegant Camino Real hotel.

A spokesman for the CIA in Langley, Virginia, declined to comment on Castro's account. Castro said that during the meeting, she expressed her concerns that those who supported Batista's overthrow but were not communists were being pushed out of the new government. Castro writes she agreed to help the CIA gather information but refused to accept money for her efforts and said she wanted no part in any violence.

"I want to be very clear that agreeing to collaborate with you does not signify that I will participate in any violent activity against my brother, nor any official in the regime," she told the agent. "This is my most important condition. And moreover, I would say it is the only condition."

"Enrique," whom Castro says she later learned was a CIA officer in Cuba named Tony Sforza, then asked her to smuggle messages, documents and money back into the country hidden in canned goods. He told Castro she would receive information through shortwave radio communications. Castro chose a waltz and a song from the opera Madame Butterfly as the signals her handlers would use to let her know if they had information for her. Castro said she remained on the island while her mother was alive, believing she was protected from the full wrath of her brother. Her mother died in 1963 and she fled Cuba the following year, eventually settling into a quiet life in Miami, where she ran a pharmacy until 2007 and is generally well regarded by other Cuban exiles. □

Errant pilots were working on their laptops

JOAN LOWY,

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two pilots have told U.S. investigators that they were going over schedules using their laptop computers in violation of company policy while their Airbus passenger jet overflew their Minneapolis, Minnesota, destination by 150 miles, the National Transportation Safety Board said Monday. The Northwest Airlines pilots — Richard Cole, the first officer, and Timothy Cheney, the captain — said in interviews conducted during the weekend that they were not fatigued and did not fall asleep, the board said in a statement.

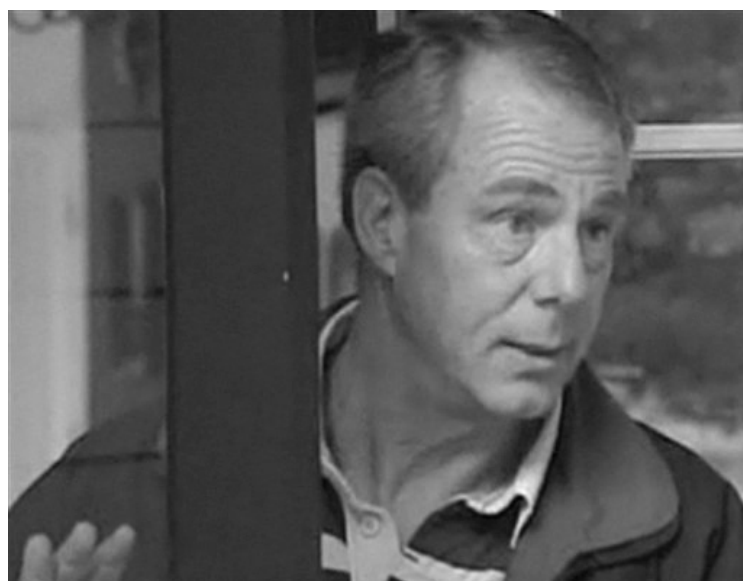
Instead, Cole and Cheney told investigators that they both had their laptops out while the first officer, who had more experience with scheduling, instructed the captain on monthly flight crew scheduling. The pilots were out of communication with air traffic controllers and their airline for more than an hour and did not realize their mistake until contacted by a flight attendant about five minutes before the flight's scheduled landing time, the board said. By then, Northwest Flight 188 with its 144 passengers and five crew members was over Wisconsin, a neighboring state to Minnesota, continuing to cruise at 37,000 feet.

Many aviation safety experts had said it was more plausible that the pilots had fallen asleep during the San Diego-to-Minneapolis flight last Wednesday night than that they had become so focused on a conversation that they lost awareness of their surroundings for such a lengthy period of time. Air traffic controllers in Denver, Colorado, and Minneapolis repeatedly tried to raise the pilots by radio. Other pilots in the vicinity tried reaching the plane on other radio frequencies.

Authorities became so alarmed that National Guard jets were readied for takeoff at two locations and the White House Situation Room alerted senior White House officials, who monitored Northwest Flight 188 as the Airbus A320 flew across a broad swath of the mid-continent out of contact with anyone on the ground.

"It's inexcusable," said former NTSB Chairman Jim Hall. "I feel sorry for the individuals involved, but this was certainly not an innocuous event — this was a significant breach of aviation safety and aviation security."

Cheney and Cole are experienced pilots, according to the NTSB.



This image rendered from video on Friday, Oct. 23, 2009 and made available by KGW-TV in Portland, Ore., shows Northwest pilot Richard Cole at his home in Salem, Ore.

Associated Press

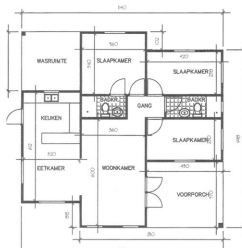
Cheney, 53, was hired by Northwest in 1985 and has about 20,000 hours of flying time, about half of which was in A320s. Cole, 54, had about 11,000 hours of flight time, including 5,000 hours on the European-built jetliner.

Both pilots told the board they had never had an accident, incident or violation, the board said.

The pilots acknowledged that while they were engaged in working on their laptops they were not paying attention to radio traffic, messages from their airline or their cockpit instruments, the board said. That is contrary to one of the fundamentals of commercial piloting, which is to keep attention focused on monitoring messages from controllers and watching flight displays in the cockpit.

"It is unsettling when you see experienced pilots who were not professional in flying this flight," said Kitty Higgins, a former NTSB board member. "This is clearly a wake-up call for everybody." Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat, called the incident "the ultimate case of distracted driving, only this time it was distracted flying." □

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Senate health care bill will embrace 'public option'



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nev. gestures while speaking on health care reform during a news conference, Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

By DAVID ESPO

AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Health care legislation heading for the Senate floor will give millions of Americans the option of purchasing government-run insurance coverage, Majority Leader Harry Reid announced Monday, although he stopped short of claiming the 60 votes needed to pass a plan steeped in controversy.

Reid, D-Nev., said individual states would have the choice of opting out of the program. His announcement was cheered by liberal lawmakers, greeted less effusively by the White House and noted with a noncommittal response by Democratic moderates whose votes will be pivotal.

Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine, the only Republican to vote with Democrats on health care so far this year, issued a statement saying she was "deeply disappointed" in the approach the Democratic leader had chosen.

Reid said, "While the public option is not a silver bullet, I believe it's an important way to ensure competition and to level the playing field for patients with the insurance industry." He said a long-delayed Senate debate on President Barack Obama's call for an overhaul of the health care system would begin as soon as the Congressional Budget Office completes a mandatory assessment of the bill's cost and impact on

coverage.

Changes on the public option — and numerous other provisions in the measure — are possible during a debate expected to last for weeks.

And officials said Reid had prepared several variations of key provisions so he could make adjustments in his bill at the last minute and still make sure he was within Obama's target of a \$900 billion price tag over a decade.

Both the House and Senate are struggling to complete work by year's end on legislation extending coverage to millions who lack it, to ban insurance industry practices such as denying coverage because of pre-existing medical conditions and to slow the rise in medical costs nationally.

As in the Senate, attempts to complete drafting a measure in the House have been delayed by internal Democratic divisions on the details of a government-run option. Differences in bills passed by the House and Senate would have to be reconciled before any legislation reached Obama's desk.

In an appearance at a Florida senior center during the day, Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggested a new name for the same approach to ease the opposition. She suggested "the consumer option." Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., appearing at Pelosi's side, used the term "competitive option."

Critics say that by any name,

the approach amounts to a government takeover of the insurance industry.

Indifference to moderates, Reid also said he was including a provision for nonprofit co-ops to sell insurance in competition with private companies.

Senate Democratic officials say the bill Reid envisions would require most individuals to purchase insurance, with exemptions for those unable to find affordable coverage. Large businesses would not be required to provide insurance to their workers, but would face penalties of as much as \$750 per employee if any qualified for federal subsidies to afford coverage on their own.

The bill will also include a tax on high-cost insurance policies, despite opposition from organized labor, officials said. In a gesture to critics of the plan, Reid decided to apply the new tax to family plans with total premiums of at least \$23,000 a year. The Senate Finance Committee approved a tax beginning at \$21,000 in total premiums.

Nominally, the majority leader has spent the past two weeks melding bills passed earlier by the Senate's Finance Committee and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. But in reality, he has had a virtual free hand to craft a new measure in consultations with senior members of the two panels and top White House aides.

"I feel good about the

consensus that was reached within our caucus and with the White House," he said at his news conference. And we're all optimistic about reform because of the unprecedented momentum that now exists."

Within minutes, the White House released a statement saying Obama was "pleased that the Senate has decided to include a public option for health coverage, in this case with an allowance for states to opt out."

Obama has long voiced support for such a plan but has also signaled it is not a requirement for a health care bill he would sign. He has also said he would like bipartisan support for the legislation — and Snowe appears to be his last, best hope for that.

She favors a standby provision for government coverage if there is not enough competition in the private marketplace. Reid said that was not in his bill. "We hope that Olympia will come back. ... She's a very good legislator. I'm disappointed that the one issue, the public option, has been something that's frightened her."

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who has long backed a government-run insurance option, said the approach "has a new life because as Americans have learned more about it, they have come to see it is the best way to reduce costs and increase competition in the health insurance industry."

Ben Nelson of Nebraska, the most conservative Democrat in the Senate, "is not committing how we will vote regarding any proposal Senator Reid is advancing," said spokesman Jake Thompson.

Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., a moderate seeking a new term in 2010, said through a spokesman she intends to study the details and decide how to vote based on the impact on her home state.

With the support of two independents, Democrats command 60 seats in the Senate, precisely the number needed to overcome any Republican filibuster.

Asked about the prospects for success, Reid answered, □

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Jury selection begins in first polygamist trial

MICHELLE ROBERTS

Associated Press Writer

ELDORADO, Texas (AP) — More than 150 potential jurors, including 10 women in prairie dresses and braids, crammed into a makeshift courtroom Monday as jury selection began in the first criminal trial stemming from the raid of a polygamist sect's ranch last year.

Raymond Jessop, 38, is charged with sexual assault of a child, stemming from his alleged marriage to an underage girl. The girl, according to church documents seized by authorities, gave birth at age 16 at the Yearning For Zion Ranch in Eldorado. If convicted, Jessop faces 20 years in prison.

He is also charged with bigamy, but that charge is to be tried separately. Prosecutors allege Jessop has nine wives, including three that were married to a brother before the brother was excommunicated by Warren Jeffs, the jailed leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

The FLDS, which believes polygamy brings glorification in heaven, is a breakaway sect not recognized by the mainstream Mormon church, which renounced polygamy more than a century ago. In all, 12 sect members have been charged with crimes ranging from failure to report child abuse to sexual assault and bigamy.

Potential jurors for what would be Schleicher County's first jury trial in more than a decade waited Monday morning on plastic folding chairs in a building next to the courthouse. A few were dismissed with early exemption claims, and about a dozen FLDS members, conspicuous because of their distinct dress, remained in the pool.

Randy Mankin, the editor of the weekly newspaper, The Eldorado Success, was dismissed. His mother and college-age son had also been summoned but took earlier exemptions allowed for older jurors and full-time students.

After answering group

questions about their biases and whether they had personal connections to those involved in the case, potential jurors began undergoing individual questioning by attorneys late Monday. The questioning of potential jurors was scheduled to continue Tuesday, and Texas District Judge Barbara Walther said she hoped to complete jury selection by then.

The county sent summonses to 300 registered voters, the largest jury pool in its history, in hopes of seating 12 jurors and two alternates — a task that could be a challenge in a small county that became international news with the raid last April.

Authorities took 439 FLDS children into state custody and conducted a weeklong raid at the ranch, confiscating hundreds of boxes of documents and family photos. Images of the women and children dressed in prairie clothing dominated cable news networks for weeks after the raid and after a subsequent court rulings sending the children back to their parents.

If lawyers can't come up with a jury in Schleicher County, the trial could be moved to an adjoining county.

Jessop's trial is expected to last two weeks, said assistant Attorney General Eric Nichols, who is prosecuting the case. The prosecution's witness list includes 59 people, including law enforcement and child welfare officials, two of Jessop's alleged underage wives and former FLDS members.

Authorities have said little publicly about the charge against Jessop, but documents seized from the ranch indicate the assault charge stems from his alleged relationship with a girl who was in labor for several days in August 2005. When ranch residents consulted Jeffs, he told them not to take her to the hospital, according to church documents seized at the ranch.

"I knew that the girl being 16 years old, if she went to the hospital, they could put Raymond Jessop in jeopardy of prosecution as the government is looking for any reason to come against us there," Jeffs



Raymond Jessop, left, the first man to face criminal charges following the raid of a polygamist sect's West Texas ranch arrives at court with an unidentified man Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, in Eldorado, Texas. Prospective jurors lined up in a cold rain Monday outside a municipal building that will serve as a makeshift courthouse for the first of a dozen polygamist sect members charged with abuse of underage girls.

Associated Press

wrote in a journal seized by authorities.

Jeffs was arrested in 2006 and convicted as an accomplice to rape in Utah for arranging an underage marriage there. He faces similar charges in Arizona and is charged with bigamy and sexual assault of

a child in Texas. One of Jeffs' daughters allegedly married Jessop the day after she turned 15. The bigamy charge against Jessop pertains to that alleged marriage. Under Texas law, generally, no one under 17 can consent to sex with an adult.

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U.S. soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division fire mortars in the Pech Valley of Afghanistan's Kunar province Monday, Oct. 26, 2009. From left to right are CPL Jeremy Foley of Bloomington, IL and SPC William Makenzie of Pendleton, OR.

AFGHANISTAN

Continued fro Page B1

The U.S. did not say where in western Afghanistan its helicopter went down, and no other aircraft were reported missing.

Associated Press

The second crash took place when two U.S. Marine helicopters — a UH-1 and an AH-1 Cobra — collided in flight before sunrise over the southern province of Helmand, killing four American troops

and wounding two more, Marine spokesman Maj. Bill Pelletier said. The casualties marked the Drug Enforcement Administration's first deaths since it began operations here in 2005. Afghanistan is the world's largest producer of opium — the raw ingredient in heroin — and the illicit drug trade is a major source of funding for insurgent groups. The U.S. has decided to target production and distribution networks after programs to destroy poppy fields did little except turn farmers against the American-led NATO mission. NATO said the helicopter containing the DEA agents was returning from a joint operation that targeted a compound used by insurgents involved in "narcotics trafficking in western Afghanistan."

"During the operation, insurgent forces engaged the joint force and more than a dozen enemy fighters were killed in the ensuing firefight," a NATO statement said. Eleven Americans, including another DEA agent, and 14 Afghan security troops were wounded in the crash, NATO said.

Military spokeswoman Elizabeth Mathias said hostile fire was unlikely because the troops were not receiving fire when the helicopter took

off. She said troops had been rushed to the crash site to determine the cause.

The crash came less than a week after a U.N. report found that the drug trade is enabling the Taliban to make more money now than when they ruled Afghanistan before the U.S. invasion in 2001. The DEA sent more agents to Afghanistan this year to take part in military operations against insurgents who use drug smuggling to raise funds for their war against NATO and its Afghan allies.

It was the heaviest single-day loss of life since June 28, 2005, when 19 U.S. troops died, 16 of them aboard a Special Forces MH-47 Chinook helicopter that was shot down by insurgents.

U.S. forces also reported the deaths of two other American service members Sunday: one in a bomb attack in the east, and another who died of wounds sustained in an insurgent attack in the same region. The deaths bring to at least 47 the number of U.S. service members who have been killed in October.

This has been the deadliest year for international and U.S. forces since the 2001 invasion to oust the Taliban. Fighting spiked around the presidential vote in August, when 51 U.S. soldiers died that month — the

deadliest for American forces in the eight-year war.

President Barack Obama mourned 14 Americans killed Monday and told a military audience he will not be hurried as he evaluates whether to alter U.S. strategy in the war. "I will never rush the solemn decision of sending you into harm's way. I won't risk your lives unless it is absolutely necessary," Obama said during a visit to Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida.

Obama is debating whether to send tens of thousands more troops to the country to curb the burgeoning Taliban-led insurgency.

Doubts about bolstering the U.S. force grew after widespread fraud marred the Aug. 20 presidential election, raising doubt whether the U.S. and its NATO allies had a reliable partner in the fight against the militants.

Afghan officials scheduled a runoff election Nov. 7 between President Hamid Karzai and challenger Abdullah Abdullah after U.N.-backed auditors threw out nearly a third of the incumbent's votes, dropping him below the 50 percent threshold required for a first-round win in the 36-candidate field.

Abdullah complained Monday that there were no assurances that the November vote would be fairer than the first balloting. He called for the head of the government's Karzai-appointed election commission chairman, Azizullah Lodin, to be replaced within five days, saying he has "no credibility."

Lodin has denied allegations of bias in favor of Karzai, and the election commission's spokesman has already said Lodin cannot be replaced by either side.

Another flawed election would cast doubt on the wisdom of sending in more U.S. troops. With less than two weeks to go until the vote, disagreements have emerged between the U.N. and the Afghans on how to conduct the balloting.

Lodin said the commission hopes to open all 23,960 polling stations from the first round. The U.N. wants to open only 16,000 stations to cut down on the number of "ghost polling stations" that never opened but were used to stuff ballot boxes. □



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PG	HET GEHEIM VAN MEGA MINDY	daily: 3:30	5:15	7:15	NEW
		matinee: 12:00	1:45	late show: 11:00	
PG	FAME	daily: 5:00	7:15	9:30	
		matinee: 12:30	2:45	late show: 11:45	
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4	daily:	8:00	10:00	
		matinee:	late show: 12:00		
R	SORORITY ROW	daily: 4:15	6:30	8:45	
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PG	SUSKE & WISKE	daily:	4:30		
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R	THE STEPFATHER	daily:	6:15	8:30	
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		matinee: 12:30	3:15	late show: 11:30	
PG	TOY STORY 2 3D	daily:	4:15	6:15	
NEW		matinee: 12:15	2:15	late show:	
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4	daily:	8:15	10:15	
		matinee:		late show: 12:15	
R	ZOMBIELAND	daily: 4:00	6:00	8:00	
		matinee: 12:00	2:00	late show: 12:00	
PG-13	SURROGATE	daily: 4:15	6:30	8:45	
		matinee: 1:45		late show: 11:15	
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Karadzic boycotts opening of his war crimes trial

MIKE CORDER,
Associated Press Writer

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Radovan Karadzic boycotted the opening day of his war crimes trial Monday and sent no lawyer to defend himself, forcing judges to adjourn the hearing. Judges then vowed the trial would begin Tuesday with or without the former Bosnian Serb leader.

The suspension brought cries of anger and anguish from the small public gallery full of survivors of Bosnia's 1992-1995 war, which left more than 100,000 people dead, most of them victims of Bosnian Serb attacks.

Many survivors had traveled by bus from Bosnia to see Karadzic finally face justice. A small group briefly refused to leave the courtroom after the adjournment and one woman threatened a hunger strike.

Admira Fazlic, who was imprisoned in Bosnian Serb-run camps during the conflict, shook her head as she left the courtroom.

"We are shocked," she said. "Radovan Karadzic is making the world and justice ridiculous. He is joking with everybody."

Karadzic, one of the central figures of the Balkan wars triggered by the breakup of Yugoslavia, faces two counts of genocide and nine other charges or war crimes and crimes against humanity. His trial — the most important war crimes case since the

uncompleted trial of his mentor, Slobodan Milosevic — is seen as a chance for the court to redeem itself after allowing Milosevic to hijack his own war crimes trial.

The former Yugoslav president died of a heart attack in 2006 after dragging out his defense for more than four years. Survivors revile Karadzic as the man whose political dream of creating an ethnically pure "Greater Serbia" triggered the Srebrenica massacre — Europe's worst bloodbath since World War II — and the notorious campaign of sniping and shelling that turned Bosnia's picturesque capital Sarajevo into a killing field.

His genocide charges stem from the 1995 murder of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica and from the Bosnian Serb campaign of ethnic cleansing against the country's Muslim and Croat populations.

Karadzic, who evaded capture for 13 years, has repeatedly refused to enter pleas, but insists he is innocent. He faces a maximum life sentence if convicted.

He stayed away from Monday's hearing, claiming he has not had enough time to prepare, despite being in custody and working on his defense since his arrest on a Belgrade bus in July 2008.

Judge O-Gon Kwon said in the absence of Karadzic, who was defending himself, or any lawyer representing him, he was suspending the case until

Tuesday afternoon, when the prosecution would begin its opening statement.

Court spokeswoman Nerma Jelacic said the delay was to give Karadzic time to reconsider his boycott.

Judges "have figured out what they are going to do: They are going to start with or without him," she said.

In a letter dated Friday and released after the proceedings began Monday, Karadzic again pleaded for more time.

"I would and never will boycott my trial, but if I am not prepared that would not be a trial at all," he wrote. "There must be a fair solution."

Prosecutor Hildegard Uertz-Retzlaff urged judges to appoint a defense attorney to represent Karadzic whether he likes it or not, saying he should not be able to deliberately hold up the trial.

The only sign of Karadzic in the courtroom was a pair of headphones lying on the desk where he has sat during pretrial proceedings.

Observers say the 64-year-old Karadzic's absence from Courtroom One at the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal should not overshadow the case's significance. Yet Karadzic's boycott and the uncertainty over whether the court should impose a defense attorney on him has raised the specter of a repeat of Milosevic's trial, who also had an attorney forced on him.

Param-Preet Singh of Human Rights Watch said denying



View of the empty seats of the defense where Radovan Karadzic was supposed to sit, center rear, if he would have been attending the start of his trial at the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, Monday Oct. 26, 2009.

Associated Press

Karadzic the right of self-defense could backfire.

"To strip him of that right by imposing counsel, you could have the situation where you have an uncooperative defendant forced to defend himself in a way he did not want," she said.

Seeing Karadzic finally face justice is enormously significant to victims who still cannot put to rest their memories of the horrors, said the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Belgian Serge Brammertz.

Dzemla Delalic, her gray hair covered by a white head scarf, shook her fists at the tribunal as she left the building Monday, threatening to go on hunger strike if the case does not proceed.

"They protect him here and there is nobody here to help us," said Delalic, a Srebrenica survivor who lost 30 male family members in the

massacre.

Karadzic has worked hard to avoid facing justice. He says he cut a deal with U.S. peace envoy Richard Holbrooke in 1996 in which he agreed to drop out of public life in return for immunity from prosecution.

Holbrooke denies making such a deal and tribunal judges say it would not be binding on them. Karadzic's whereabouts was unknown for years until his arrest last year when he was posing as New Age healer Dr. Dragan Dabic, disguised behind thick glasses, a bushy beard and straggly gray hair.

Prosecutors wanted to try Karadzic together with his wartime military chief, Gen. Ratko Mladic, but Mladic remains on the run, one of only two suspects still sought by the court. The other is a former leader of rebel Serbs in Croatia, Goran Hadzic. □

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Rod Beckstrom, president and CEO of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of ICANN's 36th International Public Meeting in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, Oct. 26, 2009.

Associated Press

KELLY OLSEN
AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The Internet is set to undergo one of the biggest changes in its four-decade history with the expected approval this week of international domain names — or addresses — that can be written in non-Latin script, an official said Monday.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, **IRAQIS**

Continued from Page B1

Sunday's twin suicide blasts in the heart of the capital struck the Justice Ministry and the Baghdad Provincial Administration, the worst attacks in more than two years. They raised fears about Iraq's ability to protect itself as it prepares for January elections and the U.S. military withdrawal.

The children who were killed were on a bus leaving a daycare center near the Justice Ministry when the attack occurred, said an official at the hospital where the bodies were brought. A police official confirmed the death toll and said the bus driver was also killed and six children injured. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Baghdad's top security officials brought reinforcements to guard government institutions Monday and blocked streets around the capital, acting on intelligence suggesting such buildings could be the militants' next target, Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, a spokesman for the city's operations command center told The Associated Press. But those measures seemed

or ICANN — the non-profit group that oversees domain names — is holding a meeting this week in Seoul. Domain names are the monikers behind every Web site, e-mail address and Twitter post, such as ".com" and other suffixes. One of the key issues to be taken up by ICANN's board at this week's gathering is whether to allow for the first time entire Internet addresses insufficient to many angry Iraqis who fear more attacks and question the ability of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government to keep the country secure.

"Al-Maliki is always on TV bragging that the situation is stable and security restored," said Ahmed Mahmoud at Baghdad's Yarmouk hospital after he found the remains of his brother. "Let him come and see this mass destruction."

Al-Maliki has staked his political reputation and re-election bid on his ability to bring peace to the country. As Iraqis grief turned into anger Monday, it was an ominous sign for his re-election bid.

"This explosion made people furious," said Ahmed Hassan, an employee at the Ministry of Education. "People will not re-elect this government."

There have been no claims of responsibility, but massive car bombs have been the hallmark of Sunni insurgents seeking to overthrow the country's Shiite-dominated government. It was the second deadly bombing targeting government offices in the area since August, when coordinated blasts against two ministries killed more than 100 people.

The death toll rose to 155 on Monday as Baghdad residents

Internet set for change with non-Latin addresses

to be in scripts that are not based on Latin letters. That could potentially open up the Web to more people around the world as addresses could be in characters as diverse as Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Greek, Hindi and Cyrillic — in which Russian is written.

"This is the biggest change technically to the Internet since it was invented 40 years ago," Peter Dengate Thrush, chairman of the ICANN board, told reporters, calling it a "fantastically complicated technical feature." He said he expects the board to grant approval on Friday, the conference's final day.

The Internet's roots are traced to experiments at a U.S. university in 1969 but it wasn't until the early 1990s that its use began expanding buried the dead. About 500 people were injured, authorities said. The initial investigation suggested the vehicles, each packed with thousands of pounds of explosives, might have passed through some security checkpoints before hitting their destination, al-Moussawi said.

Baghdad's top security officials reviewed the footage taken by security cameras in the area of Sunday's blasts, al-Moussawi said. The footage showed a 26-seat bus targeted the Justice Ministry, and a minibus, with up to 10 seats was detonated at the Provincial Administration.

The interior and the engine of the first vehicle were heavily modified to accommodate 2,205 pounds (1,000 kilograms) of explosives, al-Moussawi said, adding the minibus carried 1,543 pounds (700 kilograms) of explosives.

Both bombings were suicide attacks, al-Moussawi said. The remains of the attackers' bodies were recovered from the vehicles' wreckage, and investigators are trying to determine the bombers' identities, he added.

Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani said 76 people have been arrested so far, but he

beyond academia and research institutions to the public.

Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's new president and CEO, said that if the change is approved, ICANN would begin accepting applications for non-Latin domain names and that the first entries into the system would likely come sometime in mid 2010.

Enabling the change, Dengate Thrush said, is the creation of a translation system that allows multiple scripts to be converted to the right address. "We're confident that it works because we've been testing it now for a couple of years," he said. "And so we're really ready to start rolling it out."

Of the 1.6 billion Internet users worldwide, Beckstrom — a former chief of U.S. cybersecurity — said that

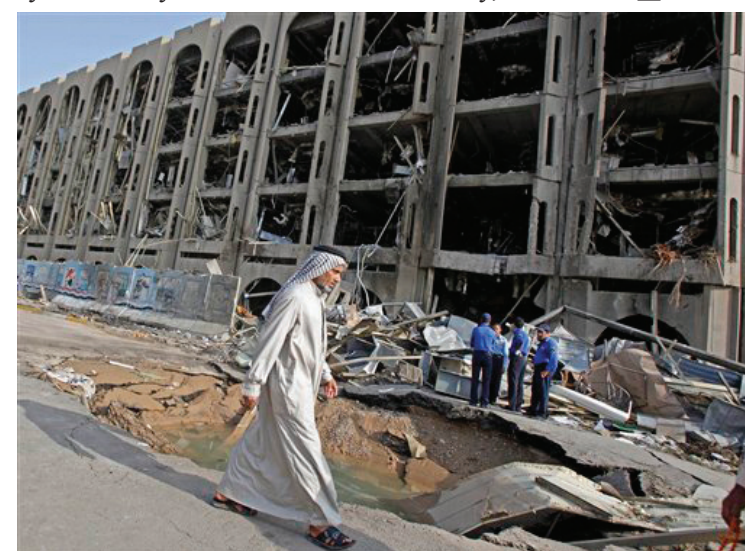
more than half use languages that have scripts based on alphabets other than Latin.

"So this change is very much necessary for not only half the world's Internet users today, but more than half of probably the future users as the use of the Internet continues to spread," he said.

Beckstrom, in earlier remarks to conference participants, recalled that many people had said just three to five years ago that using non-Latin scripts for domain names would be impossible to achieve.

"But you the community and the policy groups and staff and board have worked through them, which is absolutely incredible," he said.

ICANN is headquartered in the United States in Marina del Rey, California. □



did not provide information on who they were or how they are believed to be connected to the horrific crimes, which took place just hundreds of yards from the heavily fortified Green Zone.

"This is a terrorist act," al-Bolani said. He called on all the political forces to cooperate and assist the Iraqi security forces.

The U.S. military said on Monday 11 people suspected of involvement in the blasts were detained during a massive hunt by the Iraqi security forces.

The U.S. military said Iraqi forces conducted security sweeps with the U.S. troops in western Baghdad, and staged raids in the northern city of Kirkuk and near the northern

city of Mosul — where those suspected of aiding the Baghdad attackers were believed to have been based. Kirkuk is 180 miles (290 kilometers) north of Baghdad and Mosul is 225 miles (360 kilometers) northwest.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said the U.S. military is providing bomb disposal and forensic help to Iraqi authorities at their request.

The street where the blasts occurred had been reopened to vehicle traffic just six months ago. Shortly after, blast walls were repositioned to allow traffic closer to the government buildings — all measures hailed by al-Maliki as a sign that safety was returning to the city. □

German politicians sign coalition agreement

BERLIN (AP)—Three German party leaders announced a coalition agreement Monday night, pledging to form a government led by Chancellor Angela Merkel that would reform health care and cut up to €24 billion (US\$36 billion) in taxes.

The parties approved the coalition deal nearly a month after general elections, after negotiating government policy and ministry portfolios.

“We are addressing the citizens of Germany with this agreement,” Merkel said at the signing ceremony. “We have the courage and the intention to bring Germany forward with our coalition.”

The new parliament on Wednesday will formally elect Merkel and swear in the new Cabinet — including members

from the three coalition parties, Merkel’s Christian Democrats, their Bavarian sister party the Christian Social Union and the pro-business Free Democrats. Going into the Sept. 27 elections, both the Christian Democrats and Free Democrats had advocated tax cuts in an effort to spur economic growth. However, they differed on how far to go at a time when efforts to combat the economic crisis have pushed up debt.

It is unclear how the new government will craft its planned tax cuts, which could total some €24 billion over four years.

Free Democrat leader Guido Westerwelle also said last week he wants all nuclear weapons to be pulled out of Germany — an issue that may

prove vexing to the country’s NATO allies, including the United States. Merkel has made no pledge on that issue so far.

A cornerstone of the coalition agreement is reform to the nation’s health care system. It is expected to include a freeze on employers’ contributions, meaning individuals will carry the burden of any cost increases.

Child benefits and tax write-offs for families with children are to be increased in 2010, making good on an election promise by the Free Democrats to ease the burden on families.

“By lowering taxes, the new government is living up to one of its central promises made during the election campaign,” said Eckart Tuchtfield, an



Germany’s Free Democratic Party (FDP) chairman Guido Westerwelle, Christian Democratic Union (CDU) chairwoman Chancellor Angela Merkel and Bavaria’s Christian Social Union (CSU) chairman Horst Seehofer, from left, show the agreement for their new ruling coalition after the signing ceremony in Berlin, Germany, Monday, Oct. 26, 2009.

Associated Press

analyst with Commerzbank AG. “However, by doing so, budget consolidation is likely to become more difficult as expenses will not be cut to the same degree, at least at the present juncture.”

He said the planned tax cuts would likely be financed

through new borrowing.

Germany’s export-fueled economy returned to modest growth in the second quarter after a deep recession, and business confidence and industrial orders have been improving. □

Venezuela accuses Colombia of spying in slaying probe



Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez gestures as he delivers a speech during the closing ceremony of the VII ALBA Summit in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Saturday, Oct. 17, 2009. During the two-day summit, hosted by Bolivia’s President Evo Morales, Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez offered to share use of his country’s new satellite with ALBA’s other members, which include Ecuador, Cuba and Nicaragua, officials said.

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — President Hugo Chavez’s government accused Colombia on Monday of using its state security agency to spy on Venezuela while purportedly helping investigate the killings of eight Colombians.

Venezuela sent a diplomatic protest note saying officials of Colombia’s DAS state security agency were “detected carrying out espionage work and attempting to bribe.”

Venezuela did not give details in its statement but said authorities seized documents referring to a conspiracy to destabilize its government. It also demanded the DAS halt the espionage.

Colombia has offered help in investigating the slayings of 10 men — eight Colombians, a Venezuelan and a Peruvian — whose bodies were found in the Venezuelan border state of Tachira on Saturday.

Venezuelan authorities say relatives told them the men were kidnapped from a soccer field where their team was playing near the border Oct. 11.

The killings, which Venezuela says were likely carried out by one of the warring factions in Colombia’s conflict, appear to be exacerbating already hostile relations between Chavez’s government and the U.S.-allied administration in Bogota.

Colombian Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez said it remains unclear what sort of armed group killed the men, or why. He said there are various hypotheses, including that the violence involved criminal organizations or guerrillas or militias.

For more than four decades, Colombia’s conflict has pitted leftist rebels seeking to topple the government against the military and far-right paramilitary fighters.

Jose Miguel Vivanco, the Americas director of Human Rights Watch, called for Venezuela and Colombia to “work together to hold the culprits accountable and prevent more horrific atrocities like this.”

Venezuela’s foreign ministry said its officials were taking victims’ bodies to the Colombian border town of Cucuta to turn them over to their families.

The ministry cited “a lack of resources” on Colombia’s part to pick up the cadavers. Colombian officials disputed that, saying Venezuela denied them permission to fly in with Colombian aircraft to return the bodies to their families.

One 19-year-old Colombian survived the ordeal and was hospitalized in Caracas with a gunshot wound to the neck. □



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Yankees beat Angels 5-2, advance to World Series

MIKE FITZPATRICK

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Yankees won their first pennant in six years Sunday night, beating the Los Angeles Angels in the American League championship series to secure a place in baseball's biggest event.

The Yankees won 5-2 in Game 6 of the ALCS behind the savvy pitching of Andy Pettitte and next host defending champion Philadelphia in the World Series opener Wednesday night.

Cliff Lee is expected to face Yankees ace CC Sabathia in an enticing pitching matchup between former Cleveland teammates — and the past two American League Cy Young Award winners.

Ridiculed in the past for his October flops, Alex Rodriguez played a huge role in helping the Yankees advance through the playoffs, batting .438 with five homers and 12 RBIs.

"I couldn't be more excited," Rodriguez said. "I feel like a 10-year-old kid."

The slugger earned his first trip to the World Series during a 16-year career in which he's accomplished almost everything else.

Pettitte set a postseason record for wins, Johnny Damon hit a two-run single and Mariano Rivera closed it out in familiar fashion with a six-out save as the Yankees won their 40th American League crown by vanquishing the Angels, a longtime nemesis.

Now, the Yankees go for their record 27th title — when manager Joe Girardi was hired two years ago, he took jersey No. 27 with that in mind.

"We're just trying to enjoy this," Derek Jeter said. "Hopefully, we can play one more great series."

Not a bad way for Jeter and crew to finish up the first season at the team's new \$1.5 billion ballpark



New York Yankees celebrate after winning Game 6 of the American League Championship baseball series Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, in New York. The Yankees defeated the Los Angeles Angels 5-2 to win the American League Championship. (

Associated Press

For manager Mike Scioscia and his sloppy Angels, it was their latest playoff failure during a decade of consistent regular-season success. Since winning their only championship in 2002, the Angels are yet to return to the World Series despite five AL West titles in the past six years.

"At times we played good baseball. At times we shot ourselves in the foot," Scioscia said.

After rain postponed Game 6 for a day, the clear weather and mild temperature at first pitch was a stark change from the first two games of the series.

Pettitte escaped a jam in the sixth, going to 3-0 on Kendry Morales before knocking down a comebacker with runners at second and third to preserve a 3-1 edge. The left-hander pumped his fist, then headed for the dugout.

Continued on Page B12



This is a Jan. 31, 2009, file photo showing Serena Williams of the United States, right, and Russia's Dinara Safina posing at the net before the Women's singles final match at the Australian Open Tennis Championship in Melbourne, Australia.

MATTIAS KAREN

AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — After months of debate about who is more deserving of the No. 1 ranking, Serena

Associated Press

Serena, Safina battle for No. 1 ranking in Doha

Williams and Dinara Safina can settle the issue on the court at the WTA's season-ending Sony Ericsson Championships.

Safina recaptured the top ranking from Williams on Monday, but the margin is so slim that the player who performs better at this week's tournament in Doha will end the year as No. 1 — adding an extra element of prestige to the lucrative event.

Safina has held the top spot for 26 weeks this year but the Russian has faced persistent questions about whether she's worthy of the title without having won a Grand Slam tournament. Williams won her 11th major title at this year's Wimbledon, after also taking the Australian Open.

"It would be awesome," Williams said Monday about the prospect of ending 2009 atop the rankings. "It would be really cool. But I would have to win." Actually, she only has to win one more match than Safina. If both players have equal results, Safina keeps the top ranking.

The eight-player tournament starts Tuesday with a round-robin group stage, with the top two players

from each group advancing to the semifinals. Williams and Safina are in different groups, meaning they will not get to face each other until a potential match in the knockout rounds.

Williams was drawn with her sister Venus and Russians Svetlana Kuznetsova and Elena Dementieva. The other group consists of Safina, former No. 1 Jelena Jankovic of Serbia, Victoria Azarenka of Belarus and Danish teenager Caroline Wozniacki.

"I'm in a tough part of the section of the draw," Serena Williams said. "So we'll see what happens." Safina, meanwhile, is tired of defending her credentials as the top-ranked player in the world.

"I don't want to think about this right now," she said. "Last year I was winning every tournament and they (were) asking me why I'm not No. 1. This year I became No. 1, there is no Grand Slam. It is every day going to be something."

Safina has 7,731 points in the latest rankings to lead Serena Williams by 155 points. Each win in the round-robin stage here is worth 160 points.

The other six players also have plenty to play for. □

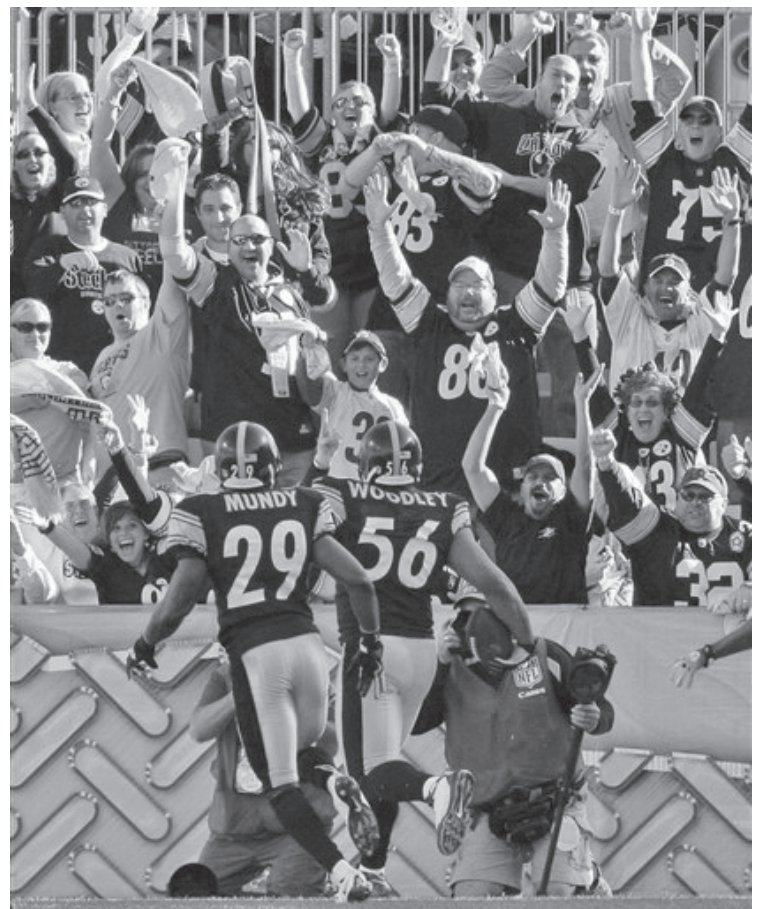
NFL Roundup

Steelers' two defensive TDs beat Vikings 27-17

PITTSBURGH (AP) — LaMarr Woodley returned Brett Favre's fumble 77 yards for a touchdown and Keyaron Fox ran back an interception 82 yards for another as Pittsburgh turned three major defensive stands into a 27-17 victory on Sunday to end Minnesota's six-game winning streak. Two goal-line stands helped turn the anticipated quarterback showdown between Favre and Ben Roethlisberger into a defensive duel. And the Super Bowl champion Steelers are tough to beat in any game that's decided by defense. The Vikings had a first down inside the Steelers 1 during the

third quarter but settled for a field goal.
Saints 46, Dolphins 34
At Miami, the unbeaten Saints overcame an early 21-point deficit, mounting touchdown drives of 82, 79 and 60 yards on successive possessions in the second half to overtake the Dolphins. NFL passing leader Drew Brees had his worst day of the season, with three interceptions and five sacks. But he scored twice for the Saints. Tracy Porter's 54-yard interception return sealed the win for the Saints, who're off to their best start since 1991. Patriots 35, Buccaneers 7

At Wembley, England, Tom Brady threw three touchdown passes and had more than 300 yards as the Patriots beat the winless Tampa Bay Buccaneers in NFL's third regular-season game at Wembley Stadium. For the Bucs, who gave up a home game to play in London, the new surroundings didn't help. They fell to 0-7 and saw their losing streak extended to 11 games overall. At East Rutherford, New Jersey, the Arizona Cardinals bewildered Eli Manning with their blitzes, forced four turnovers and used timely plays by their veterans to beat the New York Giants.



Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker LaMarr Woodley (56) rambles into the end zone after recovering a fumble by Minnesota Vikings quarterback Brett Favre and returning it 77 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Oct. 25, 2009. The Steelers won 27-17.

Associated Press

McGwire joins Cardinals as hitting coach

R.B. FALLSTROM

AP Sports Writer

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Retired slugger Mark McGwire, whose home run record was tainted by steroid allegations, is returning to baseball as hitting coach under St. Louis Cardinals manager Tony La Russa.

The Cardinals said Monday that La Russa had agreed to a one-year contract for a 15th season as manager and that McGwire will replace Hal McRae.

McGwire hit a then-record 70 home runs with the Cardinals in 1998 — a mark since topped by Barry Bonds — and retired with 583 homers in 2001. He famously refused to answer questions about steroid use during a March 2005 congressional hearing, saying he wasn't there to talk about the past.

He has received just under 25 percent support from voters in his three appearances on the Hall of Fame ballot, well under the 75 percent needed. McGwire has largely been out of the public eye since retiring.

McGwire was not at the news conference at Busch Stadium. La Russa and general manager John Mozeliak said there

will be no effort to protect McGwire from reporters and questions about steroids. □

Tony La Russa, right, speaks as St. Louis Cardinals owner Bill DeWitt, Jr., left, listens during a news conference announcing La Russa will return for a 15th season as manager of the St. Louis Cardinals, and that former Cardinals slugger Mark McGwire will become hitting coach, Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, in St. Louis.

Associated Press



With less-heralded Cardinals Jason Wright, Tim Lincecum and rookie Beanie Wells finding the end zone, Arizona took over first place in the NFC West. After starting with five straight wins, the Giants have lost two straight.

At Arlington, Texas, with Tony Romo bringing the offense to life and the defense giving up little more than long drives at the start of each half, the Cowboys came off their bye with their most impressive win of the season and first

against a team with a winning record.

In other NFL games it was, New England 35, Tampa Bay 7; Pittsburgh 27, Minnesota 17; Houston 24, San Francisco 21; Indianapolis 42, St. Louis 6; San Diego 37, Kansas City 7; Green Bay 31, Cleveland 3; Buffalo 20, Carolina 9; N.Y. Jets 38, Oakland 0; Dallas 37, Atlanta 21; New Orleans 46, Miami 34; Cincinnati 45, Chicago 10; and Arizona 24, N.Y. Giants 17. □



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**WORLD SERIES***Continued from Page B10*

Pettitte left to a standing ovation with one on and one out in the seventh and tipped his cap to the sellout crowd of 50,173, the largest at the new Yankee Stadium. He earned his 16th postseason win, breaking a tie with John Smoltz, and his fifth to close out a postseason series — also a major league record.

“We’ve got a lot of confidence in Andy when he’s on the mound. He’s been a big-game pitcher for us for 14 years,” Jeter said. Joba Chamberlain got two key outs and Girardi went to a well-rested Rivera in the eighth. He gave up a two-out RBI single to Vladimir Guerrero, making it 3-2, then retired Morales to end the inning.

A diving play by first baseman Mark Teixeira helped Rivera escape further damage.

It was the first earned run allowed at home by the 39-year-old Rivera in a postseason save situation. But the Yankees added two insurance runs in the eighth on a pair of Angels errors and Teixeira’s sacrifice fly. Rivera finished up in the ninth for his record 37th postseason save, and the Yankees had their pennant.



New York Yankees’ Alex Rodriguez, left, Mark Teixeira (25), Derek Jeter and Robinson Cano, right, celebrate after winning Game 6 of the American League Championship baseball series Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, in New York. The Yankees defeated the Los Angeles Angels 5-2 to win the American League Championship.

Associated Press

“You bring him in, you feel like the game’s over. He’s the best,” Pettitte said.

Rodriguez reached base all four times up Sunday and drew a bases-loaded walk in the fourth that put New York up 3-1. Including their unprecedented collapse against Boston in 2004, the Yankees had lost five straight times with a chance to close out an ALCS — and six in a row with an opportunity to end a playoff series.

But this time, New York got it done with help from Jeter, Pettitte, Rivera and Jorge Posada, all part of the

late 1990s dynasty under manager Joe Torre.

Normally airtight on defense and fundamentals, the Angels made eight errors in the series and several other uncharacteristic mistakes. The miscues continued early in the clincher, when 16-game winner Joe Saunders walked five in 3 1-3 shaky innings and Guerrero was doubled off first base on a shallow fly.

The Angels trailed in all eight of their playoff victories against New York, including a stirring 7-6 triumph in Game 5 on Thursday night that

extended the series.

The Angels eliminated New York with division series wins in 2002 and 2005. They are the 73-63 against the Yankees in the regular season since 1996, when Jeter took over at shortstop and New York began a run of four World Series titles in five years.

Looking to lock up the pennant, the Yankees turned to a familiar source of success in Pettitte. The 37-year-old left-hander delivered, allowing one run in 6 1-3 innings for his second closeout win of these playoffs. □

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Candidatos Mujica y Lacalle, a reñida segunda vuelta en Uruguay

MONTEVIDEO (Reuters) - El ex guerrillero José Mujica enfrentará al ex presidente opositor Luis Alberto Lacalle en una reñida segunda vuelta electoral en noviembre, buscando mantener a la izquierda en el poder en Uruguay.

El conteo oficial primario de las elecciones generales de la víspera corroboró el lunes un reparto casi igualitario de los votos entre el gobernante Frente Amplio, por un lado, y los partidos tradicionales Nacional y Colorado, por el otro.

El resultado confirmó la división del país de 3,3 millones de habitantes entre una izquierda que en su primera gestión mostró una tendencia moderada y la centroderecha tradicional.

Lacalle, Mujica y Pedro Bordaberry, candidato presidencial colorado, reconocieron el resultado y comenzaron el lunes los preparativos para la votación definitiva marcada para el 29 de noviembre.

Bordaberry, que tiene previsto reunirse con Lacalle, dijo que convocaría para el miércoles al Comité Central de su partido para tomar una



Personal militar transporta urnas de votación en Montevideo para ser distribuidas a sedes electorales, el 23 de octubre del 2009. Las elecciones nacionales de Uruguay se realizarán el 25 de octubre. REUTERS/Andres Stapff

posición para noviembre, pero anunció su voto a favor del candidato blanco.

El desenlace no ha preocupado a los mercados, según analistas, luego de una elogiada gestión del saliente presidente Tabaré Vázquez, un socialista moderado, y de una actitud más moderada del más izquierdista Mujica. JP Morgan dijo el lunes que pese a que la definición se dilató un mes, “no esperamos

que (el resultado) tenga un impacto desde el punto de vista de la deuda” del país.

Contabilizado el 100 por ciento de los circuitos de votación, el Frente obtuvo un 47,49 por ciento de los sufragios emitidos, el Partido Nacional un 28,54, y el Colorado un 16,67 por ciento, dijo la Corte Electoral.

El pequeño Partido Independiente logró un 2,44 por ciento y Asamblea

Popular 0,66 por ciento. Al igual que los analistas, los votantes de la izquierda afirmaban el lunes que la segunda ronda será reñida. “Para noviembre está difícil porque los otros partidos unidos están cerca. Hay que ver si toda la oposición va a votar a Lacalle”, comentó Pedro Maldero, de 68 años y vendedor de periódicos, a Reuters.

Con esos resultados el

Frente tampoco retendría la mayoría parlamentaria propia, con la que gobernó desde el 2005, pero la Corte Electoral dijo que habrá que esperar al conteo de los votos observados, o separados para estudio, para una definición final en los próximos días.

“La sociedad nos exige un esfuerzo más, es decir participar en una segunda vuelta”, dijo en la noche del domingo Mujica, de 74 años, y llamó a enfervorizados partidarios continuar la lucha por otros 30 días.

“¡Vamos a la victoria!”, insistió el ex guerrillero ante miles de partidarios que agitaban banderas y pancartas frente al hotel donde Mujica esperó los resultados.

Por su parte Lacalle, de 68 años, declaró que el pueblo “seguramente está pensando quien tendrá la capacidad de conducir al país desde el Poder Ejecutivo”.

La segunda vuelta “va a ser muy pareja (...) muy reñida y va a estar muy sujeta al desempeño de las dos fórmulas en los días de campaña que restan”, dijo a Reuters el politólogo Gustavo de Armas. □

Gobierno se opone a juicio político a Lugo

ASUNCION (AP) - El gobierno se opone a un posible juicio político al presidente Fernando Lugo por haber criticado a los paraguayos adinerados porque “sólo expresó su sentimiento”, según dijo el jefe del gabinete Miguel López el lunes.

El ex obispo católico, adherente de la Teología de la Liberación, lleva 14 meses en el poder y de acuerdo con la constitución tendrá que gobernar hasta el 15 de agosto de 2013. El sábado en una reunión con líderes de un barrio marginal al sur de Asunción, Lugo expresó: “vamos a dar pasos más claros y firmes por un Paraguay más digno, equitativo y mucho más solidario con la democracia participativa”. “Los que quieren seguir mirando el pasado de sus privilegios y buen vivir, en defensa de sus cajas de ahorros en bancos internacionales, ellos no quieren cambiar”, afirmó. Lugo sostuvo -según publicó el portal estatal Ipparaguay en la internet- que los individuos con deseos de ver un cambio en el país “son los que no salen cada día en las páginas de sociales de la prensa”. □

Bogotá sin descartar hipótesis en masacre de colombianos en Venezuela

BOGOTA (AP) - El canciller Jaime Bermúdez afirmó el lunes que Bogotá no descarta ninguna hipótesis en el asesinato de un grupo de colombianos en Venezuela y que tampoco hay confirmación de que fuera una acción de rebeldes o guerrilleros del Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN).

Las autoridades venezolanas confirmaron el hallazgo el sábado en distintos puntos del estado de Táchira, en la frontera con Colombia, de 10 cadáveres baleados de hombres. Los muertos podrían ser parte de un grupo, en su mayoría de colombianos, que según parientes de las víctimas habían sido secuestrado el 11 de octubre en el municipio Fernández Feo, también en Táchira.

Hasta ahora no ha quedado claro qué hacía el grupo en Táchira, ni desde cuándo se encontraba en esa región o quiénes pudieron ser los autores

de la masacre. Las autoridades venezolanas han dicho que hubo un sobreviviente, el colombiano Manuel Junior Cortéz, de 19 años; y quien actualmente es atendido en el Hospital Militar, en la capital venezolana de Caracas.

“Es muy importante que las autoridades venezolanas colaboren rápidamente, ágilmente en establecer la causa...y, por supuesto, llevar a los responsables a la justicia. Eso es fundamental. No hay ninguna hipótesis descartada”, dijo el canciller Bermúdez a reporteros tras un acto en un hotel del norte de la ciudad.

“No lo tenemos claro para nada”, respondió el ministro al ser consultado sobre las versiones en Caracas que fue una acción perpetrada por el rebelde grupo colombiano del ELN. Las “hipótesis que hay aquí presentes pueden ser tema de mafias, de milicias, de guerrilla”, agregó. □

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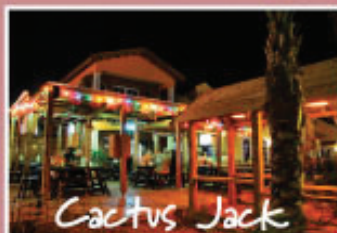


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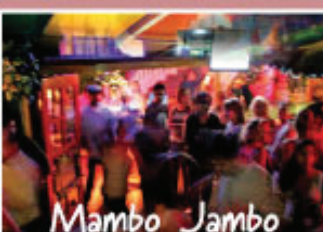
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